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Jeannie Lowrie o' Laichie Toon



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Jeannie Lowrie o' Laichie Toon

By JOHN MITCHELL



ABERDEEN: WILLIAM SMITH & SONS
THE BON-ACCORD PRESS

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JEANNIE LOWRIE

O' LAICHIE TOON

This Booklet was originally issued for private circulation, but owing to the many requests for copies sent to the Author and the Publishers, it has been decided to issue this public edition.

JEANNIE LOWRIE

O' LAICHIE TOON

By JOHN MITCHELL

Author of "Bydand," etc.



ABERDEEN: WILLIAM SMITH & SON
THE BON-ACCORD PRESS

1920

TO MY DEAR OLD FRIEND
WILLIAM SMITH THE PRINTER,
IN RECOLLECTION OF MANY A
PLEASANT AFTERNOON CONFAB
IN THE UPPER ROOM OF
THE ATHENÆUM.

J. M.

ABERDEEN, *June*, 1920.

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Jeannie Lowrie o' Laichie Toon

THERE'S a bonnie wee bit glenie up amo' the Conval
hills,

An' oot about an' in about it's fou o' fusky stills,
Wi' Laichie lyin' lythely roon the broo o' Dullan brae,
A gey aul'-farrant toonie nae a hunner miles fae Spey.

An' there upo' the High Street o't, there stan's the Royal
Oak,

That blythesome Jeannie Lowrie heir't fac her aul' Uncle
Jock—

A crabbit, cankert, grippy carle, byord'nar near the bane,
He cou'dna tak' it wi' 'm, ye see, an' sae it fell tae Jean.

Jean hid a wee bit hirple, tho' 'twis byous ill tae see,
A winsome face, a cheery smile, a twinkle in her e'e ;
Aye ready wi' a pairtin' dram, an' keen tae crack a joke,
Nae winner tho' the worthies a' forgether't at the Oak.

An' a' the lads war' daft aboot her hair o' flaxen hue,
That shimmert in the sunshine, an' she'd bonnie een o' blue,
That sparklet wi' the licht o' love, as wi' a lilt sae sweet
She'd sing an aul' Scots sangie that wid gar a body greet.

She joggit on gey cannilie, an' aye heeld up her en'
Wi' the 'billies' o' the Betschach an' the 'chielies' fae the
Glen ;
Bit 'chappies' doon fae Dev'ronside or ower fae Auchendoon
Cou'd aye get faurest ben the hoose tae ca' the hinmaist
roon.

An' fegs she foggit weel, an' seen her moggen-fit wis fou,
An' mony a chiel wis unco fain her purse an' pub tae woo ;
"Na, na," she'd say, fin priggitt wi'—"A man ! na, weel a wat,
I'm mistress o' the Royal Oak, an' *it* gies nae back-chat."

"Bit, still an' on," I've heard her say, "there's fyles I'd need
a man
Tae dytle roon aboot the doors, an' aye be at my han'
Tae lowse an' yoke the fairmers' shalts, ca' oot an' in the kye,
An' broach the Mortlach caskie fin Glenfiddich's rinnin' dry.

"Bit ach ! I like them a' sae weel, it blecks me sair to chise
Atween the grieve o' Mutherton an' Jock o' Conval-leys ;
Forbye, there's Geordie Forbes fae the Mains o' Fiddichside,
Aye vowin' that he'll droon 'imself' oonless I be his bride.

"An' Geordie, sauls, a protty stock, a swippert, soople chiel,
His marrow's nae in Achendoon for jig or Heelan' reel ;
Bit, Lord preser's, on market days, fin he gets in the dram,
He casts his quyte an' clears the closs, an' disna care a damn.

"I dinna fash my heid aboot an' antrin fecht or twa
'Tween neebors fa hae cas'en oot, it's aye been Laichie law ;
A black e'e or a bleedy niz, an a' the doctor's bill
Is "Gie the tow anither tit, we'll souther't ower a gill."

"Mains threeps that he wis fairly vrang aboot yon yearlin'
stirk,
For noo he min's that Millies pey'd it comin' fae the kirk,
An' Millies swears the'll be nae mair aboot the spaviet horse—
Foof, they're better freens than ever as they steer a hamewith
coorse.

"Bit pranks like yon o' Geordie's, tchach, they widna dae ava,
An' mair than that he'd lickley drink me oot o' hoose an' ha' ;
I'll jist be daein as I am, and be bunslave to nane,
Tho' it's mortal caul' on frosty nichts to lie my leefu' lane."

.

Year in, year oot, for mony a lang, Jean sweel't her fusky
stoups,
An' feow cou'd haud the can'le tae her for mairrages an' rouns,
Fae Leevit's Glen tae caul' Corsemaul an' roon by Collargreen,
At ilka collieshangie she wis aye upo' the scene.

Fin young Kininvie cam' o' age there hid tae be a spree,
The factor thocht o' gaun awa' an' he wis denner't tae ;
A new minister sattlin' doon wid get a silken goon,
An' baith wid be weel dampit for the credit o' the toon.

An' she'll aye min' yon plooin' match, as lang's she's in this
worl',

Fin she forgot the beef, an' nearhan' landet in a snorl—
'Twis hauden ower at Keithockmore, faur Banker Bentley
bede,

An' a' the fairmers roon aboot war' bidden tae the spread.

The banker wis a man o' means, as weel's a man o' sense,
An' Jean wis taul' tae dae the thing regairdless o' expense ;
"Yer best fit foremost, noo," sis he, "an' gie them sic a splore,
That for years to come they'll min' aboot the match at
Keithockmore."

Roon cam' the day, an' Jean wis there wi' hosts o' willin' han's
Tae swipe the laft, an' licht the fires, an' scoor the pots an'
pans,

Tae peel the taties, skin the neeps, an' full the muckle pots,
An' blythely sang the lassies as they gaed aboot thir jots.

"Noo queyns," sis Jean, "lat's see the beef, the water's at the
bile,

We'll gie them broth they hinna hid the like o' for a fyle."

"Fat's that ye say ? ye canna see't ? ach, dinna gar me swear !"
Bit tho' they ca'd an' mair than ca'd the deil a beef wis there.

Did Jean sit doon an' girn an' greet, owercome wi' black
despair ?

"Na, na," sis she, "I never stack, an' winna yet, that's mair ;
Faur there's a will there's aye a wye tae fill a teem broth-pot,
"Sae heely, heely, queynies till I see fat can be got.

Is thon the henhouse, think ye, noo ? Weel, Leebie, gang in
bye,

An' keep the aul' wife on the news, speir a' aboot the kye ;
She winna miss a curn hens, there's hunners o' them there,
Fat needs a body swither faur there's plenty an' tae spare."

Jean thrawed their necks like pooin' corks—black, buff, an'
Wyandotte,

It maitter'dna tae her the breed aince they war' in the pot ;
Death tak's nae tent o' pedigree in ether fowls or fouk,
A' ane tae him be't laird or caird, savant or glaiket gowk.

An' lang or Mains an' Tullochallum hid med up thir min's
Boot ilka feerin', rig, an' mids, an' fa' hid neatest ines,
Jean hid the denner ready an' her deemies in a raw,
Wi' collars, cuffs, an' awprons buskit oot sae trig an' braw.

The menu wisna 'table dot' nor wis it 'à la cairte,'
'Twis ca' awa' wi' meat an' drink till ilka ane wis ser't,
An' as the drappie warnt thir he'rts an' lowst thir lygaun
gabs

They seen war' a' as thick as thieves wi' stories an' confabs.

They toastet ane anither till the reef and rafters rang,
An' deil a ane bit did thir pairt wi' story or wi' sang,
Till Banker Bentley's beamin' face wis brimmin' ower wi' fun,
An' mornin' cam' lang or they thocht the nicht hid weel begun.

.

An' did the mistress miss her hens?—fa kens, an' gin she did,
She'd blame the traiv'llin' tinkers campit ower in Laggan's wid,
“It's maist oondeemus hard,” she'd say, “that they shou'd hae
tae steal

Tae fill thir wimes—here Donal', tak' them ower this pucklie
meal.”

An' she wis nane the loser ower't, for Jean wis honour bricht,
An' till the hens war pey'd twice ower, she cou'dna sleep at
nicht;

Lang, lang the gweedwife winnert sair fa wis the kin'ly freen,
That sent her frys o' Finnan haddies hine fae Aiberdeen.

.

That's nae the day nor yesterday, an' noo Jean's boo't twafaul',
For naething's been invented tae keep fouk fae growin' aul';
Gin as they say, the gweed dee young, she's nae been free o'
faut,

Or aiblins she's weel sissent wi' the yoam o' barley maut.

An' thin an' grey's the flaxen hair o' aetime silken sheen,
An' gane's the merry twinkle that lit up her twa blue een,
The dimplet chin, the rosy cheek, the blush bemantlet broo,
The liltie o' a sangie sweet—Oh, fat's come ower them noo?

Jean's morn o' life wis fair and clear, nae seener come than
gane,

High noon wis but a bonnie dream, an' noo upo' the wane
Her sun gangs dippin' roon the wast an' castin' shedaws deep,
As' ower her placid path o' life twilight doth saftly creep.

An' as the pall o' nicht comes doon, wi' mony a weary sech,
She'll dreep her hinmaist caskies o' Parkmore an' Pittyvaich ;
She'll hing her fusky stoupies up, mak' a'thing ticht an' snod,
Syne weel content, her days' darg deen, she'll tak' the endless
road.

Nae mair she'll treetle but an' ben aboot the Royal Oak,
Nae mair she'll stan' the stirrup-cup or crack the cannie joke ;
An' neebor-wives will shak' their heids, an' gie thir een a
dicht,
As the rooshty sign abeen the door creaks eerily at nicht.

We're keerious craters, ane an' a', an' strut aboot wi' pride,
Like peacocks on a simmer's day we spread oor plumes fu'
wide ;

A guff o' caul', a hackin' hoast, Death peerin' up the stair—
Puff gangs the lowe o' life, an' seen—they're howkin' oot the
lair.

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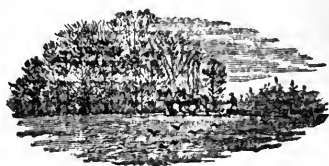
They'll lay her in a lythesome neuk aside aul' Crachie Kirk,
On Dullan water's bonnie banks, befringed wi' beech an' birk,
An' whisp'rin' win's beladen wi' the smell o' heather-bloom
Will waft a whiff o' fragrance sweet aroon Jean's lowly tomb.

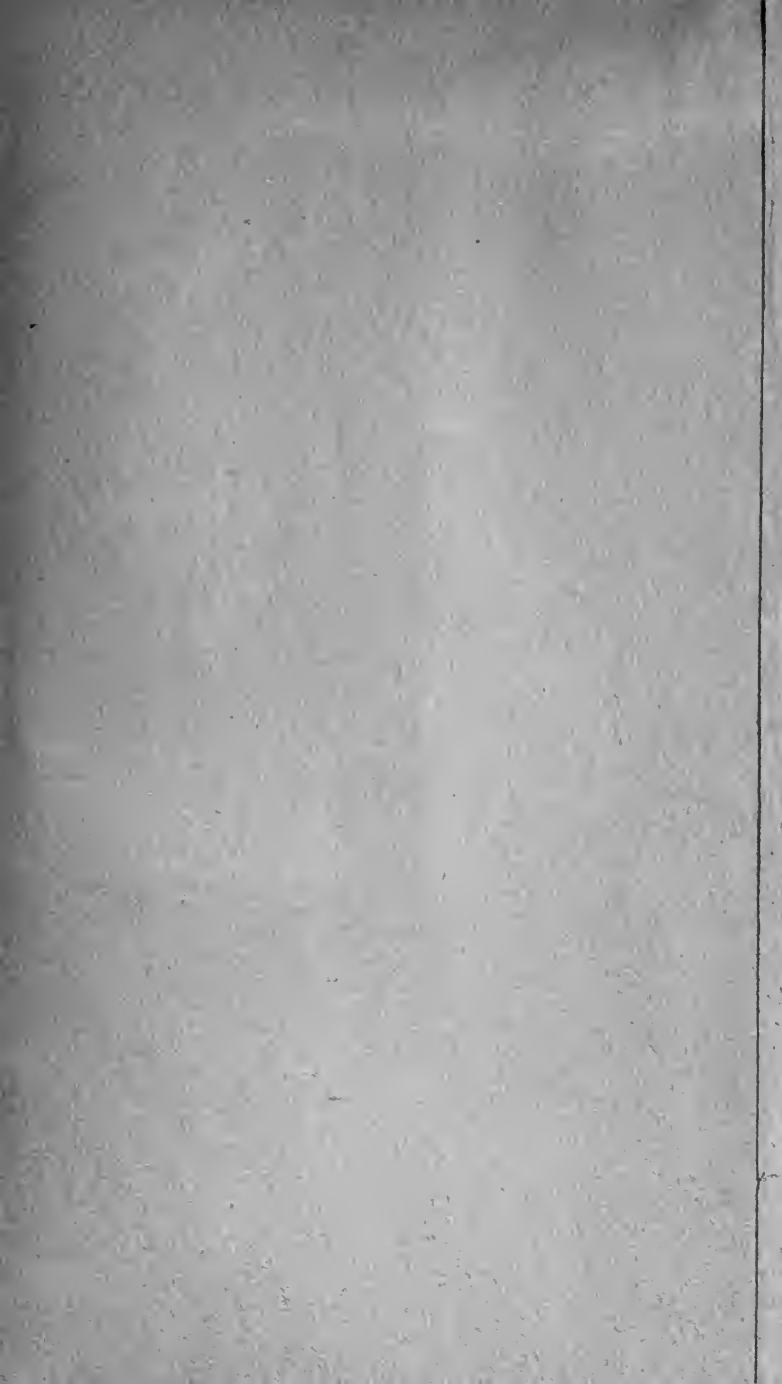
There's nether creed, nor caste, nor class inside the aul' kirk-
yaird,

The cottar an' the cadger-carle lie beddet neesht the laird ;
An' gowan's teet abeen the girss an' spread their petals pink,
The deow o' heaven—that fa's on rich an' puir alike—tae
drink.

Aye, Jean'll be gey sair bemean't, faur mair than ane wid think,
For lang she sert the public, man an' beast, wi' meat an'
drink ;

An' the mem'ry o' her kin'ly deeds on fouk's min's will abide
Lang aifter she's amo' the mools on bonnie Dullanside.





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